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Spy Story May Place Red in Elysee Palace

Ex-French Agent Who Says Key De Gaulle
Adviser Is Communist to Publish Memoirs

BY DON COOK

Times Staff Writer

PARIS—A new super-spy story is about to break on both sides of the Atlantic. It centers on the memoirs of a former French intelligence officer who charges that a key adviser to President Charles de Gaulle is an espionage agent for the Soviet Union.

The charges come from Philippe Thiraud de Vosjoly, a former colonel who for 10 years was in Washington as French liaison officer between a section of France's intelligence service and the Central Intelligence Agency.

When he was directed to return to Paris five years ago, De Vosjoly resigned and stayed in the United States. His memoirs are scheduled to appear Sunday in the London Sunday Times and reportedly in the next issue of Life magazine.

Advance leaks in the French press of his charges already have been sufficient to sting the Elysee Palace to an unusual official denunciation: "It is all very comic and we await with serenity the revelations of this so-called espionage affair. It is completely ridiculous and of the highest absurdity."

CIA Accused

Unofficially, but certainly not without inspiration, the French press already is charging that the memoirs have been cooked up by the CIA to get back at President De Gaulle for purging the French intelligence service in recent years for

agents such as De Vosjoly who had become too friendly and involved with the Americans.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a strong circumstantial element of truth in the story which De Vosjoly tells, and one French paper, Combat, comments: "One is entitled to be surprised by the sharpness of the reaction from the Elysee. As a general rule, this kind of news is treated with more contempt at this level. Now, besides the official statement, a campaign of discredit has obviously been organized. In any case, confusion has been cast up and haughty denials cannot efface it. This is an affair to be watched."

While details of the De Vosjoly "revelations" will not be known until their full publication, the out-

line of his story seems to be fairly simple.

He recounts that a Russian defector turned over evidence to the United States in 1961 which pinpointed two Soviet spies in French government service. One was Georges Paques, who worked at the Ministry of Defense and later as chief press officer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Paques was unmasked in 1962 and is now serving a life sentence in a French prison.

Refusal to Act

But De Vosjoly charges that the French have refused to act on the evidence provided by the Americans in the case of a second top Soviet spy in France who has been named in

the French press and is named in the De Vosjoly manuscript and has been a close collaborator of De Gaulle in intelligence work since the days of the Free French movement in London.

The Russian defector who provided this information to the Americans could have been either Oleg Penkovsky or Anatoli Dolnystin.

By coincidence, De Vosjoly held the comparable job for French counterintelligence in Washington at the same time as Kim Philby worked there for British intelligence. De Vosjoly also states that evidence from either Penkovsky or Dolnystin helped to unmask Philby, who defected to the Soviet Union in 1963 and has just gotten his memoirs of spying for Russia into print in the West.

While this may be true, the British already had identified Philby as a Russian agent as early as 1957 and were watching him closely in his last activities in the Middle East.

In short, De Vosjoly was indeed in a position to know about counterintelligence information being passed from Washington to Paris, and the followup action which the French were taking.

Recall Refused

On the other hand, it will be easy for the French to cast both official and unofficial suspicions or aspersions against him in view of his decision to quit the French service and remain in the United States when De Gaulle ordered his recall from Washington after the Cuban crisis.

The French weekly Le Canard Enchaîné says

that De Vosjoly had become "the very symbol of close cooperation between the French and American secret services" and that in particular he angered his French superiors when he installed a radio transmitter in the French Embassy residence in Washington during the Cuban missile crisis in order to pass messages direct to a CIA center in Miami.

According to Le Canard Enchaîné, the man whom De Vosjoly now charges with being a Russian agent practically in an adjoining office to De Gaulle was in fact responsible on De Gaulle's orders for "purging" or "puri-

fyng" the French secret services of their pro-American officers, and putting special distance between Paris and Washington in the intelligence field as in all other fields of cooperation or understanding.

Accordingly, the paper concludes, "the allegations are part of a revenge planned over several years, first of all revenge by the chiefs of the American espionage service, the CIA, and secondly, personal revenge by ex-Col. Thiraud De Vosjoly."

The De Vosjoly story is reputed to have been the basis of the plot of the recent novel "Topaz" by Leon Uris.